

I call on you to hold an official public hearing in my state.

Before the disastrous 2003 decision to weaken media ownership rules (which a federal court has now overturned), you held only one official public hearing. Further, FCC officials met behind closed doors 71 times with major broadcasters – but only five times with public interest groups. And to justify your actions, you used deceptive, industry-sponsored research data.

The will of Big Media has been heeded at the expense of American citizens and democracy itself. Ignoring the interests of the American people at the expense of Corporate America has to end. Before you rewrite the ownership rules, I hereby humbly request an official public FCC hearing in my state, impartial and verifiable research, and true and honest debate of the issues.

In particular, it has come to my attention that the Sinclair Broadcast Group currently has a petition before you that, if adopted, will allow them to acquire five additional television stations. These five stations are located in Baltimore, MD; Charleston, WV; Charleston, SC; Columbus, OH; and Dayton, OH (where Sinclair already owns one affiliate).

Considering Sinclair's recently chronicled actions including attempting to unfairly influence the upcoming Presidential election by airing a one-sided self-labeled "documentary/news commentary", based upon the right-wing Internet film entitled "Stolen Honor", I strongly urge you to deny Sinclair's petition.

Although Sinclair did not air the "documentary" in the manner that they admittedly would have wanted to due to political, social, economic, and legal pressure(s), it is clear that Sinclair has the capability and intent to continue to act as both 'censor' as they did in the prior, much-publicized April, 2004, "Nightline" incident wherein Sinclair ordered seven of its stations not to air Ted Koppel's "Nightline" broadcast featuring a roll call of the 700 U.S. troops who had died in Iraq, as well as 'propagandist' as they meant to do with "Stolen Honor".

A former FCC Chairman, broadcasting professors, conservatives, and liberals are among those who decry Sinclair's merits as a television affiliate-owner. For example, former Federal Communications chairman Reed Hundt said, "Ordering stations to carry propaganda? It's absolutely off the charts . . . Any FCC chairman,

from the left or the right, would agree with me. I'd be shocked if you could find any other broadcast conduct like this" in the history of American television.

His sentiments were echoed by Bob Zelnick, chairman of the Department of Journalism at Boston University, a self-described conservative who says he intends to vote for President Bush. Professor Zelnick called Sinclair's actions leading up to the broadcast of "Stolen Honor" (hastily re-titled, re-filmed, and re-'spun' as "NewsCentral Presents: A POW Story Politics, Pressure and the Media") "an unfortunate precedent" that runs counter to "good journalism" and "is not what network news ought to be about." A former Pentagon correspondent for ABC News, Zelnick said, "Whether you're liberal or conservative, if you have roots in the journalism profession, there are core values that transcend and need to survive election to election. You avoid airing, very close to election, highly charged, partisan material that takes the guise of a documentary."

As a proximate result of Sinclair's actions, the spotlight is now pointed directly on the FCC. The sense of outrage that Sinclair's misconduct has unleashed is wide-spread, passionate, powerful, and poised to defeat Sinclair's expansion petition.

Please do the right thing. Please protect American television. Please deny Sinclair its Petition.

Sincerely,

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